IN THE SPECIFICATION:

Please delete the paragraph on page 2, lines 13 to 24, in its entirety and substitute the following therefor:

B1

A number of forecasting contests have been conducted in the past. Such contests range from various wagering events, such as Superbowl pools, to various financial forecasting contests. Typically, such conventional contests seek to identify the best predictor for the outcome of a single event. For example, the Investorsforecast website allows participants to predict where the Dow Jones Industrial Average (DJIA) will be and what the prices of certain stocks will be at the end of next week. The person submitting the most accurate prediction for the DJIA and the person submitting the most accurate prediction for an individual stock are each given a fixed monetary award, such as $300. Other contests in the financial arena typically allow participants to invest an imaginary amount of money, with the winner being the person whose portfolio is the largest at the end of the contest. One example of such a contest can be seen at the Fantasystockmarket website.

Please delete the paragraph on page 3, lines 19 to 25, in its entirety and substitute the following therefor:

B2

In conventional forecasting contests, participants typically submit their predictions by writing, typing or speaking their predictions. Most frequently, such predictions consist of a numerical estimate of what the value of the predicted variable

B2 cont

will be at a specified point in time. Thus, for instance, in the Investorsforecast website contest mentioned above, participants type in the values of their estimates and then submit those estimates by clicking a button on the website.

Please delete the paragraph on page 4, lines 4 to 16, in its entirety and substitute the following therefor:

B3

While other prediction submission techniques have been utilized, they typically have had very limited applicability. For example, the Cyberskipper website permits participants to compete in predicting certain sports-related events. One of the prediction submission techniques utilized by this site is to display a grid of possible events. The participants can then click on a cell within the grid to designate their prediction that a particular event will occur. Thus, a different grid is displayed for each baseball game, with each row of the grid corresponding to a different baseball player and each column corresponding to a different event (e.g., "runs", "hits", home run"). If a participant believes that a certain player will get a home run in a game, he simply clicks on the appropriate cell to enter that prediction. As can be readily appreciated, this technique generally is limited to predicting binary events (i.e., will/will-not occur). In many cases, this deficiency will limit the applicability of such techniques to collection of very coarse predictions.

Please delete the paragraph on page 6, lines 27 to 36, its entirety and substitute the following therefor:

Another set of "Rocket Science" tools has become popular during the 1990s, the "computationally intensive" forecasting tools. Using massive computerized databases, mathematical search algorithms are employed to find "black boxes" for forecasting. Such techniques include "neural networks", large systems of empirically based equations with parameters that evolve over time. Neural networks appear to be used, for example, in creating the forecasts produced by the Forecasts website. Ideally, neural networks learn from their mistakes and self correct. Although neural networks are the foundation of numerous automated trading and arbitrage systems on Wall Street, in practice they sometimes "learn" too slowly and converge on very localized forecasting rules, which do not generalize well.

Please delete the paragraph on page 7, lines 19 to 37, its entirety and substitute the following therefor:

The final category of forecasts, so-called "consensus forecasts", is similar to opinion-poll surveys but with a key difference. In public opinion polls, random populations are sampled. In creating a consensus forecast, polls and surveys of economic and financial forecasters (and, sometimes, published forecasts) are conducted. Typically, the median value across participants is the consensus forecast. These surveys have proven to be quite good, generally outperforming over time the individual forecasters who are included in the panel underlying the consensus forecast. Consensus forecasts are regularly conducted for corporate earnings, money supply

and interest rates, and key macroeconomic variables. For example, both IBES and First Call survey stock analysts to identify expected corporate earnings. MMS surveys bank economists to estimate the money supply figures on the upcoming Federal Reserve H-6 reports. Blue Chip Economic Indicators was perhaps the first service providing median and average forecasts from a group of forecasters for general economic variables. The National Association of Business Economists Forecast Survey provides at least quarterly reports on what its membership anticipates for certain general economic variables. The Federal Reserve conducts similar surveys of about 30 economic forecasters with results published regularly in the financial press.

Please delete the paragraph on page 26, line 36 to page 27, line 8, in its entirety and substitute the following therefor:

Also in the preferred embodiment of the invention, participants may enter and revise their predictions as frequently as they like. In fact, providing new predictions and revising those predictions as early as possible are encouraged with incentives. This differs from many conventional contests and provides the advantage that the prediction database resulting from the contest becomes more heavily populated and tends to include predictions that are updated or newly submitted more or less continuously, rather than mainly at discrete points in time. The resulting database can often be more useful for combination forecasts, as well as for other purposes of statistical analysis.